



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY LINKAGE SPECIAL MEETING
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

May 22, 2024 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Bellingham Family Partnership Program

Topic: Bellingham Family Partnership Program

Linkage Attendees:

- **Bellingham Family Partnership Program Parents/Guardians**
- **Bellingham Public Schools staff**
- Directors present: **Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hackler, Jenn Mason, Scott Ritchey, Katie Rose.**
- Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools **Greg Baker.**
- District Leadership and Staff: Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations **Jackie Brawley**; Deputy Superintendent **Mike Copland**; Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning **Jay Jordan**; Executive Director of Family Engagement **Isabel Meaker**; Executive Director of Educational Technology **Kurt Gazow**; Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources **Matt Whitten**; Executive Director **Ari Feeney**; Chief of Operations **Jessica Sankey**; Chief Financial Officer **Kathryn Weilage**; Bellingham Family Partnership Program Principal **Kate Baehr.**

Call to Order: School Board President Douglas Benjamin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Community linkage meetings give the school board an opportunity to strengthen the connection with our students, and the school board is excited to hear what families have to say about their experiences. He introduced Superintendent Greg Baker who welcomed attendees and invited all to introduce themselves.

Meeting Purpose – Explanation of Community Linkages: Dr. Baker thanked everyone for taking the time to be here this evening. This linkage will give the school board information about the Bellingham Family Partnership Program (BFPP). Dr. Baker introduced Kate Baehr, principal of the BFPP. Ms. Baehr shared background information about BFPP.

Dr. Baker asked the five table groups to converse and respond to the guiding questions provided:

- Why did you choose to enroll at Bellingham Family Partnership Program (BFPP)?
- What do you see as the primary strengths of our current BFPP program?

- In what areas do you think BFPP could be improved or expanded?
- How do you see BFPP reflected in our strategic plan The Bellingham Promise?
- What are some things that you would like us to know about being a family including home learning in their lives?
- What ideas do you have that BFPP might incorporate to better support you and your family towards your future goals?
- What are your current hopes and dreams for your child(ren)?

At the end of the small group time, Dr. Baker asked each group to share briefly what they had discussed. Following is a summary of the comments shared:

- The feeling of community came through strongly with each topic discussed.
- We're all here holding each other – staff, students and families.
- The building is a part of the BFPP community.
- The flexibility of the program is valued and important.
- There is a broad range of supports available.
- The learning plan partner guidance is valued and appreciated.
- Many families enroll at BFPP due to recommendations from other families.
- Children and families who may feel a little lost are happy to find this program.
- There is a need for a high school program.
- BFPP has a strong theater program.
- Each family's story of how they ended up at BFPP is a little different.
- Many families feel their kids were in a traditional school that wasn't working for them, for various reasons.
- There is a partnership between the district's traditional schools and BFPP, with many staff in the traditional schools recommending BFPP to families.
- The innovation of the classes is appreciated.
- Having someone to onboard students and their families is helpful.
- Some families want to control the journey of their student's education.
- There is a feeling of love, partnership and community at BFPP.
- Many families come here feeling vulnerable.
- Families hold each other up through difficult times.
- There is shared ownership in kids' growth.
- Kids can find their passion here.
- More opportunities would be welcomed.
- For homeschool students, BFPP becomes less about the parents as their student's teacher and more about time with peers.
- It's a happy place.
- Loving adults are resources for one another.
- Many families need the flexible schedule provided at BFPP.
- Possible improvements would include high school options, more capacity, additional services and programs and access to specialists.

Dr. Baker thanked the attendees for participating in this evening's community linkage.

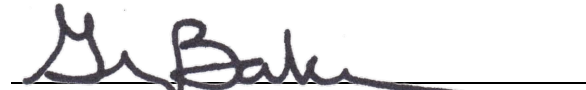
Mr. Benjamin thanked everyone for their valuable input. The school board enjoys hearing from our beneficiaries and owners, and it was wonderful to hear from families about the program at BFPP. He adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Approved:



Douglas Benjamin, Board President

Attest:



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

Minutes approved: June 18, 2024